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ABSTRACT

The study identifies two cultural sources of motivation for parental participation in the educational lives of their children -- socio-economic sentiments and age norms. Focusing principally on the latter, the thesis is that family responsibility for socialization and social control of youth to the status of child influences the quality and quantity of parents' school participation. Within this broad thesis, this paper specifies and tests five hypotheses by examining variations in the rate of parent participation with survey data on urban-slum residents with 10-19 year-olds in the household. The study also uncovers evidence of greater normative emphasis on socialization and social control to childhood among affluent and Jewish families, although these same groups, in contrast to poor families, seem to emphasize socialization to socioeconomically relevant statuses. (Author)

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Conceptions of Childhood and Parent Participation in Schools

by

John A. Michael

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ABSTTACT

The study identifies two cultural sources of motivation for parental participation in the educational lives of their children -- socio-economic sentiments and age norms. Focusing principally on the latter, the thesis is that family responsibility for socialization and social control of youth to the status of child influences the quality and quantity of parents' school participation. Within this broad thesis, the paper specifies and tests five hypotheses by examining variations in the rate of parent participation with survey data on urban-slum residents with 10-19 year-olds in the household. We uncover evidence of greater normative emphasis on socialization and social control to childhood among affluent and Jewish families, although these same groups, in contrast to poor families, seem to emphasize socialization to socioeconomically relevant statuses.

THEORY

The Family -- Single or Multiple Functions?

Past inquiries into educational and occupational attainments of youth have often dealt with the family. However the potency of family influence has captured far more scientific attention than the nature of family influence.[1] The social-mobility literature describes the family's socialization and social control of youth to economic ends with elaborate detail.[2] But usually, little distinguishes the concep-

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[1]Numerous researches during the past decade, including those by Simpson (1962), Douglas (1964), Coleman (1966), Boyle (1966) and Plowden et al. (1967), marshal a commanding body of evidence in support of the view that the family is the foremost source of influence on adolescents' educational outlooks and attainments, influencing youth more than peers and the school itself.

[2]Recent inquiries have focused on inputs and outputs. As for inputs, Michael (1969), and Kandell and Lesser (1969) describe familial socialization of sentiments for varying class destinies. Fraser (1959), Rosen (1968), Plowden et al. (1967) and Wolf (1964) depict a wide array of school-related attitudes and activities among families in varying social circumstances. As for outputs, Halsey et al. (1961), Douglas (1964), Rosen et al. (1969) and Craft (1970) offer evidence on the tremendous diversity in socio-economic aptitudes, abilities, motives, and achievements of youth, formed in response to family differentials in input.

tion of the family from that of any other group (e.g., adolescent peers). Previous studies generally ignore the fact that families socialize youth to a great number of groups and ideals. To comprehend the nature of family influence as well as its potency requires explicit inquiry into its multi-functionality. The general question we wish to raise is whether the family's pursuit of one purpose in any way affects the pursuit of others.

Of particular relevance to this paper is the fact that simultaneously with economic socialization, families are teaching their offspring to become members of a family and, even more fundamentally, children. This paper hypothesizes that the social obligations for inducting children into the family and society influences both the quality and the quantity of parental participation in the educational lives of their children, thereby affecting youngsters' educational careers. The paper's empirical effort centers on an analysis of parent-school interactions (e.g., the annual number of school visits).

Socialization and Social Control Pertaining to Childhood

American family norms at their most general level prescribe nurturance on a parent's part, obedience on a child's part. The protection of youth, the pursuit of their well-being, the provision of moral guidance and direction, a predictable supply of acceptance and affection -- these and other aspects of what we shall call "nurturance" are required of parents. While obedience is a child's duty, it is also the parent's task to secure that obedience. The protection of youth and the maintenance of discipline require parent surveillance, even when youth are

temporarily placed in the custody of other adults. Thus adults must journey to school to discharge parental obligations to their offspring. Families go to school with concerns over street-crossing guards (i.e., protection), the school's cleanliness (i.e., well-being), the "warmth" of teachers (i.e., acceptance), classroom discipline (i.e., obedience) and numerous other issues of vital significance to the parent-child role although of no direct bearing on education per se.

Family Organization--Societal recognition of the family's inherent right to socialize and control children extends to the point of fixing responsiblity for these tasks upon specific members of the family unit. In the American family childrearing duties generally devolve to mothers, and school-related activities are culturally defined as a facet of childrearing.

Hypothetically, then, mothers will participate in the educational lives of children more than fathers. And either parent, hypothetically, will respond more actively to the cultural prescriptions than parent-surrogates or non-parents. (Hypothesis #1.)

Society also regulates the amount of nurturance and surveillance deemed necessary. The magnitude of the obligation owed to children varies inversely with age. Thus, in the case of young children, where the obligation to insure well-being and conformity is strongest, we hypothesize the greatest rate of school participation by parents. (Hypothesis #2.)

A mother from Joseph Kahl's study of "common man" families discloses the impact of parental obligations on her level of educational activity at home:

> I don't make them do homework or anything. I figure they're old enough to know what they want to do and they'll get their work done by and by (1953:195, emphasis supplied).

The same mother confessed, "I don't go to see the teachers" (Kahl, 1953:195). Nor did she suggest her husband perform this chore. The anecdote reveals how the obligations associated with the conception of childhood prompted consideration of school participation in terms of the children's ages and the parent's sex.

The Effects of Rank--Goode (1959) has theorized that upper-strata families must expend greater resources on training their young and maintain closer control over fledgeling members than families of lower rank. Goode reasons that upper-strata familes stand to lose more by a forefeiture of economic rank than lower-strata families. This proposition leads us to expect more activity (including parental school participation) and stronger normative sentiments among high-ranking families in behalf of loftier educational and occupational ends. Our expectation is borne out many times over by the evidence in the studies cited in note 2.

Goode's discussion suggests even further the intriguing possibility of more activity and stronger parental obligations pertaining to nurturance and obedience at the upper reaches of society. The prolongation of many aspects of childhood through the college years by upper-strata families is one of the more obvious examples of this tendency, although our reasoning extends to the expectation of more nurturance, affection, protection, moral direction, and supervision within an age cohort by upper-strata families than by families of humbler circumstance. (Hypothesis #3).

In short, the upper strata theoretically give heavier emphasis than lower strata to the socialization and social control of youth not only to economic objectives, but also to childhood. We investige the latter part of this hypothesis rather than presume uniformity in the cultural definition and treatment of youth. However, lacking the requisite data on conceptions of childhood and the correlative obligations of parenthood, we can deal only partially with this issue by anticipating higher rates of school participation by affluent parents, especially mothers, for a longer period of a child's life. (Para cont'd: see Insert, p. 5A).

Within social classes, we expect the relative emphasis on these matters to vary. In a society with a finely gradated economy and a less well-differentiated family institution, the high-ranking families theoretically stand to lose more by a forfeiture of economic rank than from an indictment of family reputation. Family honor in this type of society tends to be more of an individual matter and can be recouped for the most part by the next generation, whereas rebuilding a fortune is at best an improbable venture requiring many generations. Furthermore, upper-strata families by virtue of their occupancy of numerous positions in the society more readily perceive the importance of education and occupation and attach greater significance to these matters. Hypothetically, then, we would expect upper-strata families in an industrial society to accord primary emphasis to socialization and social control to economic ends. Conversely, families with low economic rank in such a society are threatened as much, perhaps more, by a loss of family honor and respectability, as by a loss of economic rank. The family offers poor adults the rank and deference denied them in the economy. Accord-

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By way of explanation, any class differentials in the size of this normative burden will be more readily apparent in the behavior of mothers since the responsibility for socialization and social control to childhood is shouldered primarily by mothers. Moreover, behavioral differences are less apparent at the onset of children's lives, when the cultural demands upon parents are at a maximum in all strata, and emerge only gradually with the passage of time with progressively larger class discrepancies in parents' participation rates.

ingly, they will lay greater relative emphasis on family virtues.[3] (Hypothesis #4.)

To illustrate the relative emphases of the various social classes, we refer to a study by Hess (1963) on the instruction of middle- and working-class mothers to their children on the first day of school. The typical mother from an affluent home says:

> The teacher is like mommy, you learn from her; and if you have trouble, go to her; you are going to learn to read and write (6).

By contrast the average poor mother says:

> I tell him to do what the teacher says, not to get in trouble, not to fight, to come home right after school and not to get lost (7).

Embodying the results of much recent research on early childhood development, these remarks are highly revealing of the differential emphases of the social strata, which can be summarized thusly: The middle-class

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[3]Paraphrasing the issue, the upper strata place relatively more emphasis on achievement, whereas the lower strata place relatively more emphasis on ascription (although in an absolute sense the upper strata may emphasize both criteria more than the lower strata). Our hypothesis for such tendencies is derivable from the theory of status consistency, provided the theory's current presumption of institutional parity is modified by an explicit recognition of the inequality which obtains between institutions. According to this theory, individuals tend to employ the conceptions and sentiments of their high-ranking status (i.e., institution) in assessing themselves and their social environment.

child enters school well-prepared and highly motivated to learn, whereas the child from the working-class home typically starts school well-protected and highly motivated to obey. While the latter description also characterizes the average lower-class child, he also tends to receive the least amount of either orientation, as would be expected by virtue of the absolute differences between strata discussed earlier.

The predominance of an economic vs. childhood orientation has many implications for parent participation in school affairs. Participation in response to socio-economic sentiments is essentially an individual matter, involving adults of both sexes, since both men and women in our family system share responsibility for economic interests. Conversely the cultural norms for nurturance and surveillance fix the responsibility for participation on one parent (e.g., the mother). Moreover, economic sentiments apply to dependent offspring of all ages, whereas family obligations associated with childhood vary in intensity with the child's age. Hypothetically, the rates of parent participation will fluctuate according to the parent's sex and the child's age --very little among the rich, where economic motives for participation prevail, but marked age and sex variations will occur among the poor, where obligations to childhood predominate.

The data come from a sample of bountiful heterogenity in terms of its class composition and its racial, religious, and national origins. To disentangle class and ethnic influences, we shall examine their effects simultaneously by comparing whites with Blacks and Puerto Ricans, who are incorrectly called 'non-whites.' After examining the evidence for hypotheses 3 and 4, we advance and test an hypothesis of stronger normative demands for socialization and social control to childhood among Jews. (Hypothesis #5.)

Definition of Participation

Parent participation refers to school-related activities. By that, we mean the selection of a school system by parents and, where applicable, the selection of a particular classroom within a school. In addition to influencing placement in an educational system, parental participation encompasses interaction with school personnel, an offspring's educational peers, and other role partners affiliated with the child's status as pupil. Parents may also participate by joining school-related groups such as a parents' association. In addition, one parent may ask another to act as a parent-surrogate. Excluded from educational activities are museum trips, theater attendance, and other activities commonly associated with a middle-class style of life. Although the literature traditionally includes such activities, they usually are undertaken as ends in themselves, rather than as a means to effecting school placement or progress.

Hence their possible effects on educational achievement should be examined separately. Forerunners in the study of parental participation include Hollingshead (1949); Kahl (1953); Martin (1954); Floud (1956); Cohen (1958); Fraser (1959); Bordua (1960); Cloward and Jones (1963); Bell (1963); Douglas (1964); Boyle (1966); Rehburg and Westby (1967); Sewell and Shaw (1968); Friedman (1968); Michael (1969); Rempson (1969); and Sandis (1970). Also relevant are recent studies of the "home environment," a conglomerate of school-related activities and attitudes of parents;eg. Dave (1963), Wolf (1964), and Plowden (1967).

The conception of parent school-participation departs from earlier inquiries in a more fundamental way. Heretofore in the definition and measurement of parental participation, "stress," "pressure," or "encouragement," as it has been called, parents' actions have usually been mixed with their attitudes. Since it is common practice to mix attitudes and acts in a single measure or to substitute one for the other, the link between act and motive has seldom, if ever, been examined. In contrast, this paper's central purpose is to question the linkage between motive and act.[4] A literature review uncovers the wide-

[4] The lack of a systematic distinction and juxtaposition between ideas and behaviors plagues the study of parental influence. Much of the socialization literature examines the effects of parental <u>treatments</u> (usually actions, although

(note cont'd on p. 9A)

Note 4 (cont'd from p. 9)

sometimes actions and attitudes combined) on youngsters. The sheer content of parental ideas has less often preoccupied studies of socialization. The content should be examined separately and in conjunction with methods of treatment. Parents' actions variously support or undercut their conceptions; conversely, parents' ideas affect the import of their behavior. Illustrating a rare interest in both content and treatment, Maccoby, Matthews, and Morton (1960) report "max-

(cont'd p. 10)

spread assumption that socio-economic sentiments, particularly educational sentiments, govern family-school relations. Challenging the sufficiency of this assumption is the fact that inner-city groups with generally modest socio-economic standards have spearheaded the quest for community control of the schools. This article postulates family norms associated with childhood also govern parent-school relations.

METHODS

The data to test these ideas were collected from a random sample of households in one of New York City's more celebrated slums, the Lower East Side of Manhattan. In each household one adult, selected by random numbers, and all 10-19 year-olds were scheduled for interview. Eighty percent of the adults (988 out of 1250) and seventy-nine percent of the adolescents (555 out of 706) cooperated. The 1961 data collection netted 527 adult-adolescent pairs, which will be the unit of analysis for investigating adult-school participation. The adult is a parent of the adolescent in nine cases out of ten.

The Lower East Side is typical of many urban slums on the Northeastern Seacoast in that most of the old-time residents are white and either immigrants or the children of immigrants. Jews, Slavs, Italians are

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imum conformity by the young person to the political values of his family occurs when his parents have been neither laissez faire nor authoritarian in their dealings with him...." For more recent illustrations with more perplexing results, see Sandis (1970), and Kandel and Lesser (1969).

three of the major ethnic groups in the area. On the other hand, newcomers to the neighborhood are mostly Negroes and Puerto Ricans. The adult's race, religion, and nationality, or what for the sake of brevity we (incorrectly) call "ethnicity," were determined by questioning and interviewer observation. NORC interviewers were matched to families on the basis of ethnic factors. The adult interview gathered data on parents' attitudes, activities, primary-group ties and demographic characteristics.[5] Social class is measured by the chief wage-earner's occupation and education and the family's income.[6]

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[5]Using adults as the unit of analysis, Cloward and Jones (1963) examine class differences in parents' participation rates with the same data. They supply more details regarding the sample and data collection. A full description of the sample, data collection procedures, and presentation of instruments appear in Mobilization for Youth (1961). Data were collected in 1961 under the auspices of Mobilization for Youth and Columbia University School of Social Work with major assistance on the adult survey from the National Opinion Research Center.

[6]The Lower East Side is predominantly a lower- and working-class neighborhood by our definition. Classified as "lower class" are those families whose head typically has a grammar-school education or less; who is either unemployed, an unskilled or service worker or an operative; and family income in the bottom quartile of the nation's income distribution according to the 1960 census. The prototype of the "working-class" family is one headed by a craftsman, foreman, or small shopkeeper with some high-school education and an income in the quartile immediately below the national

Parent participation is measured by an index of three activities. First, adults were asked in the springtime how many times they had visited school during the past year. Secondly, adults reported whether or not they belonged to the PTA, and, if so, what proportion of the meetings they had attended. The third measure of involvement, indicating the degree to which parents exercise control over placement, is enrollment in a non-public school .[7] The participation index

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median. "Middle-class" families in the Lower East Side at the time of the survey were generally lower-middle class; i.e., the typical family head held a high-school diploma; a clerical or sales position; and an income in the next to top quartile of the nation's income distribution. Individuals with socio-economic characteristics of unequal or unknown rank were assigned to social classes on the basis of the average of their known rank(s).

[7]The designation of private-school attendance as parental participation constitutes explicit recognition of the importance of family control over placement within an educational system. Theoretically, open-school enrollment programs which permit crossing public-school boundaries would constitute another form of control over placement. Both participation in open-enrollment programs and influence on internal classroom allocation are unmeasured forms of involvement, thereby tending to understate the level of parental activity mainly in the public schools. Also a few parochial schools have no formally recognized parent association, although other groups within the ethnic group's institutional cluster may assume this role, in which event the parent's involvement is understated. (Note cont'd p. 12A)

(Note 7 cont'd)

In response to reservations by some readers about the inclusion of this item in the index, we adopted the suggestion of Professor Guy E. Swanson by examining the scalability of the three items, although we remain unconvinced of the value of a unidimensional cumulative scale as a measure of a complex, relatively unstudied phenomenon. We found the three items, when examined as dichotomies, form a Guttman-type scale with 87% reproducibility. Although this suggests the items fall on a common underlying continuum, the private-school measure is the weakest of the three items, with more error than non-error. A variety of factors account for this weakness: some parochial schools have no PTA; some discourage visiting; at least some families select non-public schools so as to dispense with the necessity of visiting teachers and joining a PTA (this connoting the subjective equivalence of the items), etc. In final analysis, the issue must remain indeterminate, awaiting systematic inquiry into the entire array of families' school-oriented behaviors, a feat far beyond the capabilities of the present secondary analysis.

As a precaution, the ensuing data analysis was completed using two indexes, one with, the other without the private-school item. We present the former. The latter index downgrades 61 cases (12% of the sample) by one notch on the participation index. In one instance, the two measures produce slightly different substantive results, which are reported subsequently during the discussion of Hypothesis #5.

divides the sample roughly into quartiles. The bottom quartile includes parents without any such involvement; the "low" participation category includes parents with minimal involvement on any one of the three dimensions; a "high" participation rate includes adults with any two of the following characteristics -- attendance of a non-public school, 3 or more visits during the school year, and attendance of at least "some" of the PTA meetings; the remainder of the adult sample are classified as "medium" involvement. The measure of parental involvement is not without its shortcomings. Perhaps its principal flaw is that it measures the output of only <u>one</u> adult in behalf of <u>all</u> children in the household instead of the combined efforts of all family members in behalf of a particular child.[8]

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[8]Another shortcoming is the fact that in some unknown portion of the time, parental activity was initiated by persons other than the parents. Yet the discussion treats all parental participation as if it were voluntarily initiated by parents. The validity of the participation measure is a recurring theme <u>passim</u>. since the measures of parent participation available to this secondary analysis correspond but partially to the nominal definition.

DATA ANALYSIS

Parent's Sex

In Table 1 appears evidence for testing the hypothesis that school activities are viewed as childrearing activities with responsibility devolving to parents, especially mothers. The data support the hypothesis. Only 16% of the mothers in the table were completely inactive, as compared with 35% of the fathers and full 75% of the adult respondents who were not parents. Highly active are 33% of the mothers, 16% of the fathers and 6% of the other adults. Clearly mothers are far more involved in school activities than athers; and parents, more than non-par-

Vol 15+17

Table 1 -- Educational Involvement of adults and median participation scores according to their parental status.

Educational Involvement	Parental Status: Mothers	Fathers	Others	Total
None	16	35	75	29
Low	23	31	11	25
Medium	28	18	8	22
High	33	16	6	24
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(293)	(181)	(53)	(527)
Median[a]	2.4	1.5	0.7	1.9

[a]The median is computed on index score values of 0-3, with no participation = 0.

Table 2 -- Educational involvement of adults and median participation scores, according to the child's age.

Educational Involvement	Child's Age: 10-11	12-13	14-15	16-19	Total
None	22	21	25	44	29
Low	21	28	31	21	25
Medium	30	18	27	17	22
High	27	33	17	18	24
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(133)	(145)	(104)	(145)	(527)
Median	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.9

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ents.[9]

Child's Age

Table 2 shows data for the hypothesis that parental obligations are felt more intensively in behalf of younger children. A comparison of the levels of parent participation for different age groups reveals a trend toward ever lower rates of involvement with the children's maturation. The median participation score stands at a high of 2.3 for the 10-11 year olds and falls to a low of 1.3 for the 16-19 year olds.

Class Standing and Ethnicity

Having documented in a preliminary way the importance of childhood norms for parent participation, we now examine the activity rates of mothers and fathers in different social classes and ethnic groups in order to determine the generality of the observed tendency in the community under study and to test the hypothesis that these norms are felt more keenly by affluent parents. In Table 3 we see that mothers participate more than fathers in each economic stratum and ethnic group. Thus the delegation of primary responsibility for educational affairs to mothers is apparently universal throughout the community.

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[9] The data do not indicate accurately the size of the disparity between parents and parent-substitutes, since at least some of the non-parents are also not substitute parents; e.g., in a few cases they are uncles, siblings, or spouses.

But further analysis reveals one striking exception, and one which increases our confidence in the tenability of the original hypothesis. Among some Spanish-speaking families, we find that the participation rate of fathers exceeds that of mothers. Apparently they subscribe to the Hispanic tradition whereby the father acts as the family's ambassador to outside groups while the mother remains in her place at home (Padilla, 1958; Goldberg, 1968). This interpretation fits the data, since we find the father institutes chiefly formal contacts with the school (e.g., parent-principal) and relegates informal contacts (e.g., attending PTA meetings) to the mother. This replicates the patterning for Spanish-speaking families reported by Rempson (1969).[10] In short, English-speaking mothers and Spanish-speaking fathers participate in school affairs more often than their spouses, both apparently out of deference to cultural injunctions for parents of their particular sex to act in behalf of their offspring.

Comparisons across classes quickly reveal the limits of the participatory superiority of mothers. White fathers in the middle class participate more frequently than white mothers in the lower class. (The paucity of middle-class non-white men preclude a similar comparison.)

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[10] Interesting enough, this pattern is relatively uncommon in the Lower East Side, even among Puerto Ricans, since behavioral compliance to this cultural conception of parenthood is contingent on social integration into Spanish-speaking primary groups, and such integration is not widespread. Hence the countervailing tendencies of the few families in this sub-group are masked in Table 3 by the trends of the other Puerto Rican and Negro parents, greatly superior in numbers.

Table 3 -- Educational involvement of mothers and fathers and median participation scores according to their ethnic origins and social class[a]

	Social Class							
	Lower		Working		Middle		Total Sample	
Educational Involvement	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Whites								
None	5%	33%	2%	30%	6%	22%	4%	29%
Low	50	24	22	40	7	8	21	26
Medium	15	19	25	18	29	35	25	23
High	30	24	51	12	58	35	50	22
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(20)	(21)	(55)	(33)	(52)	(23)	(127)	(77)
Median	2.0	1.8	3.0	1.5	3.2	2.6	3.0	1.9
Negroes and Puerto Ricans								
None	35%	59%	18%	30%	7%	17%	24%	40%
Low	19	33	35	32	0	67	25	35
Medium	35	8	27	19	40	0	32	14
High	11	0	20	19	53	16	19	11
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(71)	(39)	(74)	(59)	(15)	(6)	(160)	(104)
Median	1.8	0.9	1.9	1.6	3.1	1.6	2.0	1.3

[a]The table excludes 52 adult-child pairs from households in which an adult other than the parent was interviewed, and 6 pairs of other ethnic origins.

Thus the superiority of women is true only when restricted to a comparison with men of roughly similar circumstance, due to the substantial amount of class variability in the rate of school participation.[11] Examining class differences among mothers, we see clear-cut variations in the rate of participation, with the lowest rate among poor mothers and the highest rate among affluent mothers, as hypothesized. The participation rates of fathers tend in the same direction. But the participation rates of mothers vary by economic circumstance more than those of fathers. The median score of white mothers increases by 1.2 points from the lower to the middle class; and the score of non-white mothers by 1.5 points. Contrast these with an increase in the median scores of white fathers of 0.8 points and non-white fathers of 0.7 points. In short, an improvement in the family's economic standing upgrades both parents' participation, but a mother's more than a father's.

Interpreting these findings, first we note the greater activism of affluent parents stems in part from their stronger normative sentiments regarding socio-economic issues, a point substantiated by further probing of the data, which replicates earlier findings (Floud et al., 1956; Fraser, 1959). Second, these findings may also reflect stronger normative sentiments regarding the duties of parenthood, a point on which we have no further data for corroboration. Even so, the theory presented earlier had predicted greater participatory differences in the case of mothers, since they would feel more keenly than fathers the increased burden on upper-strata families for nurturance and surveillance. The available facts/fit the theory.

[11] (Note 11 appears on p. 20A.)

11 The evidence casts doubt on the purported detachment of the middle-class father from his family. While ours is an urban (rather than suburban) sample of lower-middle (rather than upper-middle) class composition, the data suggest that the myth of the uninvolved middle-class father rests on a comparison of his activity level with that of the middle-class mother. Comparison across classes, however, places the middle-class father's alleged inactivity in different perspective.

Subsequent data analysis in connection with Hypothesis #4 uncovers one further reason for the persistence of this myth in the face of sociological evidence to the contrary. That is the less sharp differentiation of tasks by sex within the middle-class family. In the lower strata, where fathers do not feel obliged to participate in childrearing, the imbalance in the sexes' involvement is felt and seen less presumably / than in the middle class, where the expectation of paternal participation is stronger.

As for ethnic differences, white mothers in the lower and working classes tend to be more active than their non-white peers, while a pattern of parity seems to exist between white and non-white mothers in the middle class. White fathers in the lower and middle classes participate more frequently than their non-white class peers, with parity occurring in the working class. Thus whites are usually more active than non-whites in the same economic circumstance. But the ethnic differences are less striking than the observed differences between economic strata. Moreover, ethnic differences in Table 3 are generally smaller than those associated with sex. In the lower class, non-white mothers participate roughly on a par with white fathers. But in the working class and even more so in the middle class, where the normative burden on mothers purportedly increases, the average rate of participation by non-white mothers exceeds that of the white fathers. Thus sex and social class are the two main predictors of parent participation.

To summarize the analysis thus far , the family norms associated with childhood appear sufficiently strong to produce higher rates of school participation among mothers, compared with fathers of comparable class and ethnic background, in all sectors of the community, save one; in the Spanish-speaking (i.e., Puerto Rican) community, some of the fathers participate more than the mothers, but this seems a response to Hispanic family norms, enjoining the father to act as the family's ambassador to outside groups. Furthermore, the norms for the nurturance and surveillance of children appear more intense among economically privileged families. This is reflected not only in the higher rates of participation of mothers and fathers in the middle class, as compared with

parents in poorer strata, but also in the disproportionate effects of an improvement in economic circumstance on mothers, on whom the bulk of the heavier responsibility falls. Ethnic differences in participation are also observed, whites generally participating more than non-whites. These differences are smaller in magnitude than the class and sex variations in participation and will be interpreted in a subsequent section.

Table 4 probes the generality of the decline of parent participation with a child's age in different economic and ethnic sectors and permits a second test of the rank hypothesis. The two right-hand columns of Table 4 bear out the hypothesis of greater activity in behalf of little children for Negroes and Puerto Ricans. White parents in these columns appear nearly as active in the lives of older children as with younger offspring. However, the overall pattern for whites is deceptive; it varies with social class. White parents in the lower class behave as hypothesized, showing the sharpest decline in activity in the entire sample. The overwhelming majority of white lower-class parents of older children are minimally active or completely inactive. Working-class whites slip from a generally high level of participation in behalf of younger children to a low level later on, but they unlike lower-class whites tend to shun no involvement. In contra-distinction to all other parent groups in the sample, middle-class whites accelerate their rate of involvement with the maturation of their children.[12] (Subsequent analysis modifies this observation, as it applies only to Jews in the sample.)

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[12]Friedman (1968) finds parents in two affluent communities in her sample participating at the high-school level as often as at the elementary level. This seems to reflect not only the propensity of wealthy

Table 4 -- Educational involvement of the adult respondent and median participation scores, according to the adult's ethnic origins, social class, and the age of the adolescent.

	Social Class							
	Lower		Working		Middle		Total Sample	
	Age of Adolescent		Age of Adolescent		Age of Adolescent		Age of Adolescent	
Educational Involvement	10-13	14-19	10-13	14-19	10-13	14-19	10-13	14-19
Whites								
None	5%	41%	11%	19%	20%	5%	13%	18%
Low	33	36	27	30	8	8	22	22
Medium	19	14	20	24	33	28	24	24
High	43	9	42	27	39	59	41	36
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(21)	(22)	(55)	(37)	(39)	(39)	(115)	(98)
Median	2.8	1.3	2.6	2.1	2.7	3.2	2.6	2.4
Negroes and Puerto Ricans								
None	39%	52%	21%	47%	18%	40%	27%	48%
Low	20	25	31	30	23	10	26	26
Medi	29	19	22	18	18	30	24	20
High	12	4	26	5	41	20	23	6
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(560	(68)	(85)	(71)	(17)	(10)	(158)	(149)
Median	1.6	1.0	2.0	1.1	2.7	2.2	1.9	1.1

[a]The table excludes 7 cases where the family's ethnicity is other than those shown.

Against the mixed patterns for whites is a uniform age-graded decline in parental activity among non-whites in all strata. The participation rate of non-white parents in the lower class declines no more rapidly than in other strata, a tendency counter to the white lower-class pattern. However, like the whites, the average level of activity of non-whites varies by class. The lower class is least prone to activity; with a rise in economic circumstances, non-white parents participate

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parents to remain active in the educational lives of their older children, but also the open-door policies of the schools serving the middle class.

Contextual influences may also be present here. Due to the prevalence of dropout in the neighborhood, middle-class parents may redouble their efforts in behalf of their offspring.

A check was made to determine whether the finding is partly an artifact of index construction, since all but one college student in the sample is middle class in origin, and their parents' level of participation was predicated on some rather arbitrary assumptions. Four parents of college children whose activity levels were unknown were classified by the mean level of activity of eight similarly circumstanced parents whose activities were known, placing the cases with missing information in the topmost category. Moreover in all cases, college attendance was considered prima facie evidence of parental activity and scored like private school attendance. The data check proved negative. When we remove from the sample the middle-class families with college youth and other youth out of school in 1961, the rate of parent involvement for the remaining in-school youth aged 14-19 rises even higher.

more frequently. Class variations are of sufficient magnitude that despite an age-graded decline among non-whites, the middle-class parents of older youth, whites and non-whites, participate more actively than the lower-class and working-class parents of young children.[13]

The theory that affluent families prolong the state of childhood beyond the years common in the lower classes led to a prediction earlier of pronounced class differences in participation in the case of older children. Examining the data with whites and non-whites combined, we find the proportions of parents of young children in the lower, working and middle classes moderately or highly active are 47%, 54%, and 68%, respectively, for a percentage difference of 21. This compares with a percentage difference between strata of 57 for parents of older adolescents, the proportions moderately or highly active in the lower, working and middle classes ranging from 23% and 33% to 80%, respectively. Correlation coefficients between social class and participation furnish additional descriptive evidence of the larger class differences in participation in the case of older children. Tau betas are 0.184 and 0.419 for younger and older children, respectively. In short, class differences in school participation are pronounced in the case of older children, suggesting not only continued educational interest in the middle class as a prognosticator of class destiny, but also the possibility of

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[13]Precedents for observing variations in participation by social class and the child's age are reviewed by Friedman (1968: 55-57).

stronger normative demands in connection with childhood on parents in affluent circles.[14]

A comparison of whites and non-whites reveals generally higher rates of educational activity among white parents at each socio-economic level. Further discussion on this pattern appears later in the paper.

While the data in Tables 3 and 4 suggest greater demands on families for socialization and social control at the upper reaches of society, a definitive assessment is impossible without direct data on the normative sentiments and conceptions pertaining to childhood. Caution is necessary as alternate interpretations are plausible. Differentials in the opportunity to participate do parallel class, sex, and age lines and they could produce the same configurations.[15] Our guess is that normative and opportunity factors are both operative with the relative

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[14]The age and sex variations might conceivably be construed as aspects of economic socialization and social control (e.g., middle-class parents remain active in their older adolescents' educational lives solely out of career interests). If this were the case, then controlling for parents' ambitions would tend to eliminate the age and sex variations in participation. When such a control is made, the correlations persist, denying the suggestion.

[15]To illustrate, the class hierarchy represents one opportunity differential. A middle-class mother can hire a babysitter and quickly drive to school, whereas a mother in the working class lacks similar economic resources and consequently cannot as readity participate. If the working-class mother does participate, either as specified or by pursuing

weight of each to be determined by subsequent inquiry.[16]

In conclusion, the data in Tables 3 and 4 are compatible with the hypothesis that high-ranking families assume a heavier burdern of socialization and social control with respect to the status of child, and this affects their rate of school participation. Fragmentary evidence from previous inquiries bolsters our confidence in this / interpretation of the

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functional alternatives (e.g., by distributing babies among neighbors and relying on public transportation), the cost of her participation generally exceeds that of the middle-class mother. A given life-style cannot be pursued by different economic strata with equal ease. As a result, the rate of participation by poorer parents would generally range lower, ceteris paribus, which is exactly what the data show.

[16]The absence of a spouse is one barrier to participation associated with class, sex, and age that is particularly instructive in its effect on participation. While mothers in single-parent households participate less than married mothers in the sample, the discrepancy between the two groups of mothers varies. The greatest hiatus occurs in the lower class, with separated, divorced, and widowed mothers participating far less than married mothers. The median participation scores for the two groups are 1.3 and 2.5, respectively. The gap narrows in the working class (1.9 vs. 2.7) and slightly reverses itself in the middle class, with non-married mothers participating slightly more (3.3 vs. 3.1). While the opportunity interpretation would explain the general trend of the data, something else — presumably normative influences — appears to counterbalance the barrier as we move up the class hierarchy.

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findings.[17] In addition, the result parallels Goode's point (1959) about the heavier burden on high-ranking families for socialization and social control with respect to the economic status.

The Relative Priority of Socialization and Social Control Objectives

Hypothetically, adults with high standing in the class hierarchy will tend to stress economic objectives, whereas the poorer segments of the community will place relatively more stress on socialization to childhood. Empirical support for the hypothesis requires comparatively small fluctuations in the participation rates of affluent families according to the child's age and parent's sex, but comparatively large age and sex fluctuations among the poor.

The data in Tables 3 and 4 generally support the hypothesis. There are progressively smaller differences in the rate of parent participa-

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[17]Evidence in support of this hypothesis comes from Floud et al. (1956) who report class differences in parents' preferences as to what age they want their children to continue in school. Psathas (1957) finds relatively more supervision of children among high-ranking families. Kohn and Carroll (1960) uncover evidence that middle-class children are more likely to have supportive fathers than working-class children, a result replicated by Rosenberg (1965). Subsequent work by Kohn (1969) finds supportiveness and the imposition of constraints by middle-class fathers in their children's behalf, but by few working-class fathers. Finally, Winch (1963: 490-492) reviews yet further evidence on the greater propensity of affluent parents to nurture and control their offspring.

tion for the two age groups with an ascent of the socio-economic ladder. A comparison of the median scores for whites and non-whites combined shows a surplus of participation in favor of the younger children of 0.8 and 0.7 for the sample's lower and working classes and a narrower deficit of 0.3 in the middle class. Another clue to the fact that a child's age shapes the poor parent's participation more than a wealthy one's comes from the progressively smaller correlation coefficients between a child's age and parental participation with improved economic conditions. Tau beta for the lower, working and middle classes declines from 0.238 to 0.194 and -0.108, respectively. The evidence weighs more clearly in favor of the hypothesis in the case of the white population; an exception occurs among Negroes and Puerto Ricans at the lowest economic level, where age differences in participation fail to exceed those in the working class. However, the relevant comparison in this case would presumbably be with an age cohort below the adolescent sample's minimum age level, so tho exception does not undermine confidence in the hypothesis.

Examining Table 3, a comparison of the proportions of completely inactive mothers and fathers reveals an average discrepancy of 20% between the sexes. But while a fifth more of the fathers than the mothers in the sample are inactive, this tendency is most pronounced among the poor. The proportion of inactive white fathers exceeds that of white mothers by 28% in the lower and working classes and 16% in the middle class. Likewise for non-whites, the discrepancy between the participatory rates of fathers and mothers is greatest at 24% in the lower class, then 12% in the working class, and least at 10% in the middle class.

The data suggest what Kohn (1969) has already demonstrated -- namely, that the sexes in the middle class share more the responsibility for childrearing/than parents in other strata.[18]

In summary, according to the evidence, an adult's sex and a child's age are especially important determinants of parental activity in the lower class, less important in affluent strata. The data support Hypothesis # 4, i.e., the poor place greater stress on socialization to childhood whereas the priviledged classes accord greater emphasis to economic ends. However, we again feel it necessary to caution the reader about the inconclusiveness of the evidence in support of the hypothesis, since data on/cultural the elements are lacking.

[18] (Note 18 appears on p. 30).

18 Hypotheses 3 and 4 are associated with empirical patterns somewhat contradictory of one another, and they intermingle in Table 3. According to the above text, the differential emphasis on the parental obligations connected with childhood (and hence the family's sexual division of labor) as a basis for school participation is apparent by comparing the proportions of mothers and fathers completely inactive. With the greatest sex differences in the lower class, these data support Hypothesis 4. Even so, during the consideration of Hypothesis 3, which asserts the upper strata shoulder a heavier normative burden that falls disproportionately on the mothers, we looked to Table 3 expecting pronounced sex differences in participation in the middle class. Table 3 is accomodating: a comparison of the proportions of fathers and mothers highly active in each class (with whites and non-whites combined) shows a percentage difference in favor of mothers of 7, 17, and 25 percents for the lower, working, and middle classes respectively. With the greatest sex differences in the middle class, those data support Hypothesis 3. (The earlier text noted the more readily observable jump in the average participation rate with a rise in economic circumstance, which was pronounced in the case of mothers.) Thus the data in Table 3 reflect the sample's response to dual considerations: on what basis parents participate and to what extent. Obviously preferable are discrete data for each hypothesis which can be tested separately.

Interpretation

The data then pose something of a paradox. The intensity of the obligations upon parents for the provision of nurturance, protection, and supervision of their children appear stronger in the upper strata, compared with the lower strata. Yet, compared with socio-economic sentiments, the childhood sentiments seem to assume lesser priority among the affluent and greater priority among the poor. These results suggest greater heterogeneity in class sentiments than family sentiments, reflecting the relative amount of differentiation of the economy and family in our society. In a familistic society, however, where this situation would be reversed, family norms would theoretically assume greater relative significance for the participation of family members in behalf of children in groups outside the family.

Ethnic-Group Variations in School Participation

Before probing the implications of the findings, we shall inquire further into ethnic variations in the rate of participation and assess their meaning, as their consideration will modify prior statements.

Ethnic variations in the rate of school participation are largely explainable in socio-economic terms. Yet, in Tables 3 and 4, within each class, small ethnic differences persist, whites tending to be more active than non-whites. That 42% of the white sample is Jewish assumes relevance in light of the Jewish reputation for nurturance and protection. Ethnographic literature on Jewish family life depicts a strong normative emphasis on familism, in general, and on parent obligations to children in particular. This tendency parallels, perhaps not coincidentally, the well known emphasis among Jews on occupational and scholastic achievement. Thus, Jewish culture lays stress

on family responsibility for socialization and social control to both childhood and socio-economic statuses. Moreover, these responsibilities interlock. Exemplary is the family duty for continued financial support for a married daughter and her scholar husband, a responsibility fixed on the daughter's parents (Zborowski and Herzog: 1952). Clearly we should anticipate a higher rate of participation among Jews than among other ethnic groups.

Now for the converse: which ethnic group accords the least nurturance and surveillance? While the ethnographic literature on this point is generally deficient (cf. Goodman; 1970), in the present population Puerto Rican culture would probably qualify. Disproportionately few Puerto Ricans in the adult sample spent their adolescent years in school. Only 40% of the Puerto Rican adult respondents progressed beyond grammar school, as compared with 67% of the Blacks, for example, Thus childhood for many Puerto Ricans was truncated. Assuming the conception of childhood corresponds even roughly to this experience, Puerto Ricans would tend to propel their offspring toward adulthood at an earlier age than other ethnic groups. Accordingly, we hypothesize the lowest rate of participation among Puerto Ricans.

A data check for each ethnic group is fettered in many instances by the sample's size. Hazarding the venture, Table 5 reveals a general tendency for Jews to participate more frequently than any other ethnic group in the same stratum. Moreover, in what may prove a surprising development in light of the earlier data analysis, Black parents participate roughly on a par with the white Gentiles in the sample. In the lower and middle classes, Negroes participate more frequently than white Gentiles, whereas in the working class they participate less. Working-class Blacks inexplicably participate even less often

TABLE 5 - Educational participation of parents and median participation scores according to their ethnic origins and social class[a]

Social Class	Educational Participation	Ethnic Origins: Jews	White Gentiles	Negroes	Puerto Ricans	Total Sample
Lower Class	None	0%	25%	34%	48%	37%
	Low	56%	31	14	27	27
	Medium	11	19	38	20	23
	High	33	25	14	5	13
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N)	(9)	(32)	(29)	(80)	(150)
	Median[b]	2.0	1.9	2.1	1.1	1.5
Working Class	None	19%	9%	9%	29%	19%
	Low	15	36	62	25	32
	Medium	22	23	20	25	23
	High	44	32	9	21	26
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N)	(32)	(56)	(34)	(97)	(219)
	Median[b]	2.8	2.3	1.7	1.9	2.0
Middle Class	None	6%	18%	0%	33%	10%
	Low	6	11	20	17	11
	Medium	23	45	20	50	30
	High	65	26	60	0	49
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N)	(48)	(27)	(15)	(6)	(96)
	Median[b]	3.2	2.5	3.2	1.9	3.0

[a]The table excludes 53 adult-child pairs from households in which an adult other than the parent was interviewed, and 9 pairs of other ethnic origins.

[b]The median was computed on index score values of 0-3, with no participation=0.

than their peers in the lower class, the only such deviation in the entire sample. This gives Puerto Ricans in the working class the slight edge over Negroes, but in the lower class, Puerto Ricans participate less frequently than Negroes and all other ethnic groups. In short, the data in Table 5 are compatible with the suggestion that Jewish families assume a heavier burden for the socialization and social control of children, compared with other ethnic groups, while Puerto Ricans assume less. Black families participate on a par with white Gentiles, ostensibly sharing similar conceptions of childhood and parental duty.

With a relatively small sample, it is difficult to pursue the empirical ramifications of the general thesis in the same vein as previously, when at issue was the intensity of normative injunctions to upper and lower-strata families. The thesis calls for pronounced differences in the rate of participation in the case of older adolescents and mothers.

A limited number of fruitful comparisons are possible. Restricting the comparison between Jews on the one hand and white Gentiles and Blacks on the other to the working and middle classes, and combining these two strata with equal weight being given to each, we find negligible differences between Jews and the others regarding their participation in behalf of young children, but marked differences regarding their participation in behalf of the 14-19 year-old group. Of the Jewish parents of youth aged 10-13 in the working and middle classes (N=38), the proportion moderately or highly active averages 67% compared with an average of 64% for the Blacks and white Gentiles in these same strata (N=84). However, the identical comparison for the older age-cohort nets weighted averages of 85% and 52%

for the two sets of parents, numbering 42 and 48, respectively. Jews apparently nurture their young longer than other whites and Negroes, although at an earlier stage, the various ethnic groups appear comparable.

These data force us to modify an earlier statemment made with reference to Table 4 that middle-class whites inflate their rate of participation as their children age, for the increase can be attributed wholly to the Jews. Examining the evidence, in the middle class we find 76% of the Jewish parents moderately or highly active in behalf of young children (N=21), as compared with 96% moderately or highly active in behalf of youth aged 14-19 (N=27). Non-Jews in the middle class maintain their level of involvement, neither upgrading it as do the middle-class Jews, nor downgrading it as do other strata. According to the data, 70% and 71% of the middle-class non-Jews were moderately or highly active in behalf of the younger and older age-cohorts, numbering 33 and 17 respectively. Within the limits of small numbers, it seems safe to conclude that the tendency to <u>maintain</u> the level of parent participation throughout the child's second decade of life is a middle-class phenemenon, whereas the tendency to <u>increase</u> parent involvement is an ethnic (Jewish) phenemenon. The latter is strengthened by the fact that Jews in the working class also upgrade their level of participation; 59% of the working-class Jewish parents of children aged 10-13 (N=17) participate moderately or highly, as compared with 73% of the of older adolescents (N=15). (There are too few Jews in the sample's working-class Jewish parents lower class to permit any comparisons.)

Age comparisons between Puerto Ricans on the one hand, white Gentiles and Blacks on the other, are restricted to the lower and working classes. In the case of both younger and older adolescents, the weighted averages for Puerto Ricans in these two strata are slightly less than those for the other parents. For younger children,

the average proportion of 94 Puerto Ricans is 45% moderately or highly active, as compared with 58% for the 85 others. In the case of older teenagers, the proportions average 24% (of 85 cases) and 33% (of 66) respectively. Thus, at each stage of the child's second decade, Puerto Ricans seem to terminate childhood slightly earlier than Blacks and white Gentiles.

As to ethnic differences for the sexes, following the same restrictions and weighting procedures, we find Jewish mothers are more active than their class equals: the proportions highly active in the working and middle classes average 59% for the 66 Jewish mothers and 45% for the 76 white Gentile and Black mothers. The sample's 14 Jewish fathers in these strata are insufficient in number for a comparison. Both Puerto Rican mothers and fathers in the sample seem to participate slightly less often than white Gentiles and Blacks, but the competing cultural definitions of maternity and paternity in the Puerto Rican community (discussed earlier) complicate the picture. [19]

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19 The tendency for extraordinary school activism among Jews in the sample and their disproportionate concentration in the middle class introduces the possibility of needing to modify earlier conclusions regarding Hypotheses 3 and 4. Perhaps earlier configurations attributed to class reflect instead the influence of the ethnicity.

A check on the data reveals not. In support of Hypothesis 3 and the earlier assertion that normative differences in nurturance are reflected by pronounced differences within the older age-cohort, we find that the size of the correlation

In summary, Jews generally participate in school affairs more than similarly circumstanced whites and Blacks, while Puerto Ricans participate slightly less. Participatory differences were pronounced among older adolescents, in behalf of whom Jews tend to increase their rate of participation whereas other ethnic groups tend to maintain their rate of participation in the middle class and decrease it elsewhere. Puerto Ricans generally participated less at all ages. Finally, Jewish mothers participate more actively than their class peers. While all these ethnic differences point to family obligations of varying intensity without corroborating evidence of a cultural nature, these suggestions in the data are regarded as speculations. A number of alternative explanations are plausible, especially in the case of Puerto Ricans, in light of

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19 (as measured by Kendall's tau beta) between social class and parent participation for non-Jews in the sample is smaller in the case of young children (at 0.177) and greater in the case of older children (0.258). Moreover, the size of the correlation between social class and parent participation among non-Jews is slightly less for fathers than for mothers (0.240 vs 0.268), thereby buttressing the earlier conclusion that an increase in the family's socio-economic rank affects the mother's rate of participation more than the father's (despite ceiling effects), since mothers must shoulder the bulk of the added responsibility.

Yet further data probes yield results for non-Jews comparable with those reported earlier for Hypothesis 4. Thus these ethnic considerations necessitate no further ammendments regarding Hypotheses 3 and 4.

their linguistic difference, a low level of social integration into the community, and the extant barriers to participation.[20]

One ethnic barrier to participation facing Negro and Puerto Rican parents deservies special mention -- the differential availability of private education. Italians, Jews, Ukranians, Poles and other groups of hyphenated Americans from an earler immigration era have long ago established worship centers in the neighborhood with schools appendaged. More than one third (39%) of the white youth between the ages of 10-19 in school at the time of the adolescent survey were attending private (mostly/parochial) schools. The comparable statistic for Negro and Puerto Rican children is three percent. The inclusion of private-school education in the index of parent participation, while justifiable on theoretical grounds, emphasizes this particular form of opportunity differential. Research

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20 A juxtaposition of childhood obligations with those attending a child's class destiny is particularly necessary. Further data analysis of the value of education (as indicated by the parents' conception of the amount of education a young man needs to do well in the world these days) uncovers ethnic patterns highly similar to those portrayed in Table 5; in each stratum, Jews tend to value education most, Puerto Ricans least.

One more caution. Rather than being conceived as normative influences, the differences in Table 5 between ethnic groups might reflect inter-personal influenes of the social context (Campbell and Alexander: 1965), for Jews in the sample are disproportionately middle class whereas Puerto Ricans are disproportionately lower class, the other ethnic groups falling between the two extremes.

on parent participation in another community setting -- one lacking these ethnic institutional clusters -- would find more comparable rates of participation between whites and non-whites than we have fo found, since the removal of the private-school item from the participation index (as a means of controlling for opportunity differences) reduces the discrepancy between white and non-white participation rates. In fact, by eliminating (text cont'd. p. 39A)....

The interplay between normative and opportunity factors is suggested by a closer look at Table 4. A comparison of whites and non-whites reveals generally higher rates of educational activity among white parents at each economic level. The discrepancy is not uniform, however. Among families with young children, the discrepancy between whites and non-whites is greatest at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder and diminishes to an imperceptible difference at the top. But among families of older children, the discrepancy between the participation rates of whites and non-whites is greatest at the top of the class ladder and diminishes further down.

Interpreting these apparently conflicting patterns in the data, we must consider the combined effects of the injunction to act with the opportunity to act. In the case of families of young children, where parents generally feel they should act, the observed discrepancies in behavior correspond primarily with the opportunity to act. Poor non-whites face both class and ethnic barriers and perforce have the least opportunity to act. As a result the largest difference in participation rates between whites and non-whites occurs at the bottom of the class hierarchy. Alternately, among families with older children, where many in the sample seem to feel less obligated to participate, particularly poor parents, there is greater uniformity

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private-school enrollment from the participation index, further investigation finds Blacks visit school and participate in the local PTA more frequently than white Gentiles, although still less than Jews. Otherwise put, among parents with equal opportunities for participation, Blacks are more active than some white ethnic groups, suggesting the possibility that Blacks are more nurturant of their youth. As for Puerto Ricans, dropping the private-school item from the index does not change their position as the least active parent group in the sample.

(Text cont'd, p. 39)

in the widespread inactivity of those with the least opportunity to act voluntarily (i.e., at the bottom of the class hierarchy) and greater variability in behavior among those with the best chance to act voluntarily (i.e., at the top of the class hierarchy). The added possibility that Jews feel under constraint to provide nurturance and continue surveillance more than other groups in the sample would exaggerate participatory differences between whites and non-whites in the older age group.

DISCUSSION

To spell out a few implications of the general thesis, this section examines the effects of parent involvement first on schools, and then on youth. We theorize that the root of parent participation affects the content of school issues, instruction, and regulations; the disciplinary methods adopted by schools; and the manner in which they are imposed on youth. Moreover, in our view schools which ignore parental conceptions of appropriate treatment of children may unwittingly aid the forces of community control. As for youth, we theorize that parent involvement affects not only youngsters' scholastic motivation and performance, but also their compliance to schoolhouse rules of good conduct. The findings also shed light on the relative influence of mothers and fathers on their offspring.

Effects on schools. While the empirical analysis focuses on quantitative aspects of parent-school relations, a few remarks on the qualitative aspects, largely speculative in character, will ramify some of the paper's main ideas. The two social inducements for parent participation under discussion would theoretically influence schools in divergent ways. Socio-economic considerations would lead

parents to raise issues of curriculum; the spirit, method, and proficiency of teaching and learning; and staying the course for the next round of academic competition. By contrast, participation out of a sense of duty to children for nurturance and surveillance would entail issues of protection (e.g., insulating small children from the rowdiness of older youth), children's well-being (e.g., balanced lunches), the provision of moral guidance and direction (e.g., pledging allegiance to the American flag), and exacting obedience (e.g., marching military fashion into classes each morning).

As the duties of parenthood are felt more keenly in behalf of young children, elementary schools tend to face relatively more issues pertaining to the socialization and social control of children. In concurrence with this view, we note that Sieber and Wilder (1967) report a disproportionate number of parents of first-grade children prefer the type of teacher who is "most concerned with maintaining discipline, seeing that students work hard, and teaching them to follow directions" (305). Progressively smaller proportions of parents with children in the fifth and tenth grades in their study choose the disciplinarian type of teacher. Another example as to how the societal conception of childhood impinges on schools is the diffuse and accepting ("whole child") ideology of elementary education which enjoins teachers to heed a plethora of children's needs -- biological, personality, social, etc. At the secondary level, by contrast, the professional ideal shifts to segmental, subject-specific relations with pupils.

Secondary schools more often deal with socio-economic (academic and vocational) issues. For corroborating evidence, our data reveal that the value of education (see note 20) predicts the participation

rates of both mothers and fathers of older youth better than the participation of either parent in behalf of younger children. Moreover, we believe that common educational practices such as the division of pupils into separate curriculums and different ability tracks, practices especially prevalent at the secondary level, can be viewed as a concession to parental concerns over their offsprings' class destinies. A youngster's future economic rank is indicated by his school status under prevailing conditions in most American high schools.

The class composition of a school's population determines much of the quality of the pressures of the social environment on the school's internal operations. The tendency of poorer strata to emphasize childhood obligations is reflected in their predilection for disciplinarians as teachers (Sieber and Wilder, 1967). Affluent parents by contrast tended to prefer the type of teacher who makes "the class interesting and encourages students to be creative and to figure things out for themselves" (Sieber and Wilder, 1967:305), a direct reflection of learning, independence, initiative, and other class-related values. For another example, while middle-class (learning-oriented) observers commonly decry the alleged preoccupation with matters of discipline in slum schools, possibly this emphasis reflects community expectations.[21]

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21 We do not mean to overdraw the degree of correspondence between the societal conception of childhood and prevailing educational practices and ideology. As Sieber and Wilder (1967:309) point out, the parental preference for a disciplinarian in the lower grades

In socially heterogenous neighborhoods, school officials often face conflicting demands regarding the socialization and social control of children and the parent body itself may split over such issues. The broad cultural injunctions for parents for nurturance and surveillance receive varied interpretations in different sectors of the community. As parents generally expect from parent substitutes what they expect from themselves, they create a political situation for schools as to whose expectations will be enforced, with what stringency, and by what methods. The surreptitious resort to force against pupils in lower-class neighborhoods by school personnel and exhortations by some lower-class parents to use force exemplify accomodations

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(cont'd) appears to be in direct contradiction "with the professional ideology that stresses the importance of a permissive classroom climate in the early grades." What we need are studies of the reciprocal influences between the societal conception of childhood and existing modes of training the young. To wit: to what extent are early childhood educators constrained to fashion and promulgate an approach (e.g., the British Infant System) in general accord with the prevailing conception of childhood? And conversely in what ways does the training for economic ends influence the family's mode of nurturance and surveillance and the societal conception of childhood? Barring the notable exceptions of a few scholars, such as Aries (1962), Musgrove (1965) and Weber (1969), the interdependencies between educational practice and ideology and the societal conception of childhood have received scant attention.

between home and school flatly unacceptable to a middle-class populace. Yet other cleavages split socially heterogenous neighborhoods over the ascendancy of socialization for economic ends vs. nurturance and discipline. Schools in socially heterogenous neighborhoods often respond to these conflicting pressures by greater internal differentiation.

One unheralded force behind the community control movement is the parental expectation that schools act as proper parent surrogates. Extensively bureaucratized school systems have tended to ignore this expectation, oftentimes with impunity, especially in slum neighborhoods. Outraged at repeated violations of their conceptions of appropriate nurturance and surveillance, poor neighborhoods with new-found social integration among parents have begun pressing their demands (manuscript in preparation). The community-control literature, in its discussion of the demands for a redistribution of power, has often presumed power motives on the parts of participating individuals, without taking full account of the role of family sentiments in parent-school relations (Fantini, 1970).

Effects on Youth -- So much for the effects on schools. What about the effects of parent participation in school affairs on the children themselves? One major consequence which we can sketch but briefly is the hypothesis that parent participation evokes greater compliance by youth to the school's culture, however it is locally defined, including conformity to schoolhouse etiquette as well as to scholastic norms.

Regarding youngsters' scholastic plans and achievements, we know already that parent influences rank second to none (Coleman, 1965; Boyle, 1966; Simpson, 1962). Therefore it is not surprising that we find (Michael, 1969) a strong

in each stratum
inverse correlation/between the rate of parent participation and school dropout. This replicates Floud's (1956) finding that educationally successful children have more active parents. In Floud's study educational success was indicated by winning a grammar-school position. Incidentally, like Floud, we also find that the children of parents of higher economic rank experience disproportionately more success than the children of equally active parents of humbler circumstance. Thus while class differentials in the rate of parent participation explain the higher rate of educational attainment in the affluent sectors of society, parent participation does not wholly explain the class effect.

Even more interesting

(text cont'd p 45.)

are the clues in the data about the yet-to-be-understood process foreshadowing school withdrawal. Previous research finds a gradual deterioration in the measured abilities, performances, and motivations of pupils from poor homes (Coleman, 1965; Michael, 1969; Craft, 1970). The classroom performances, the motivation, and the measured abilities of poor children compare more favorably to those of priviledged children in the elementary grades than later in secondary school. With the passage of time, the situation of poor youth deteriorates. The current understanding of this deteriorating process is couched in socio-economic terms, i.e., the result of differential socialization to varying class destinies (e.g Kahl, 1953).

Such an explanation is inadequate. It fails to account for the initial similarities and it overlooks the fact that these deteriorations in motivation, performance, and ability coincide with the declining rate of parent participation. As children mature, parents engage in fewer school-related activities, particularly poor parents, and youth presumably feels less familial pressure to comply to school standards. Parents removed from the school setting cannot motivate and control their children's classroom deportment or scholastic performances as easily as parents frequently at school. Lacking family support and the visibility of pupil performances diminished, the offspring of uninvolved parents may relax their compliance to academic standards and classroom rules unless peers or another primary social agent enforce school norms. The continued involvement on the part of some parents tends to sustain, sometimes even enhance, a child's motivation

and classroom department, his achievement and measured abilities (Craft, 1970).

While the present study has no available evidence on this thesis concerning grades and measured abilities, we do find the rate of parental involvement predicts youngsters' educational aspirations and plans. Youngsters of uninvolved parents in each stratum generally want and expect fewer years of schooling for themselves. As parents of older children are less active in school affairs, older adolescents generally hold lower educational aspirations and expectations than younger children in the sample. In short, the motivation of youth seems to depend on parent activity,[22] and over time in a poor neighborhood, both tend to decline. The inverse relation between school dropout and parent involvement in the sample has already been noted.

As for classroom deportment, we hypothesize that the rate of deviance from schoolhouse etiquette varies inversely with the rate of voluntary parent participation; deviance would therefore be patterned by a child's age, social class, and ethnic origin. Support for some of these ideas comes from a study by Herriott and St. John (1966). Analyzing reports by school principals, the investigators find that parental attendance of school events declines with the child's age (163) whereas the proportion of pupils showing disrespect to teachers rises from elementary to junior high school and then tapers off somewhat in high school (164-165). Furthermore, the rate of parent attendance at school events increases with the neighborhood's affluence

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22 This replicates Sandis' (1970) finding that the educational plans of better students with less ambitious parents varies directly with parental "pressure."

(41) and disciplinary problems are more prevalent in schools serving a poor population (51-52). Further evidence of an individual rather than ecological nature is needed to substantiate the hypothesis fully.

To sum up, the progressively greater difference in the rate of school participation by various social classes and ethnic groups in our study corresponds to age-graded differences in the ability and achievement, the motivation and deportment of youth. While the evidence presented on this correspondence is sketchy, it is sufficient to postulate an institutional linkage between the family and school of fundamental significance for understanding one of the key unsolved problems in educational sociology, the gradual deterioration in poor pupil's aptitudes and performances. Future studies on the issue will necessarily address a cardinal aspect of the family often ignored heretofore, namely its continuing influence over a long period of time.

The relative influence of mothers and fathers. - Previous studies have turned up varying estimates of the relative influence exerted by mothers and fathers on their youngsters' careers. The present study gives several clues as to the reasons behind the different, sometimes conflicting results.

Equating influence with involvement, Table 3 leads us to expect more influence on a mother's part than a father's. This generalization must be amended for the small minority of fathers of Hispanic tradition who are more active (and hence presumably more influential) in their children's educational lives than the mothers. [23]

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23 Due allowances must of course be made for parental influence from educational activities transpiring within the home, which the present

Complexities arise in calculating the relative amount of influence attributable to mothers and fathers when we consider variations in their rates of participation (and hence influence). Neither the absolute nor the relative amount of influence exerted by parents is fixed and uniform, as has sometimes been presumed. The higher rate of participation by economically priviledged families suggests greater amounts of maternal and paternal influence in the upper strata than elsewhere. Paternal influence in affluent circles may even exceed maternal influence in less prosperous strata. Moreover, the margin of completely uninvolved fathers over mothers, greatest in the lower class and least in the middle, suggests the influence of lower-class males, relative to their wives, is less than that of middle-class men. The suggestion corresponds with findings from other inquiries into male influence on a number of family-related topics and activities (Winch, 1963; 419-420).

A consideration of the time dimension raises further complexities. By inspecting the participation rates of mothers and fathers for different age cohorts, we find that the mother's rate of participation (and presumably her influence) tends to decline with the maturation of her offspring; but the father's rate of participation declines even faster. The median participation scores of mothers of younger and older children are 2.7 and 2.2 respectively. The

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23 (cont'd)
study's participation measure ignores completely. These activities do not necessarily occur at the same rate and in the same proportion as those outside the home.

comparable statistics for fathers are 1.8 and 1.1. Thus, objectively the mothers influence wanes with the child's maturity, but relative to the father, her influence grows.[24]

Other factors affecting the relative influence of mothers and fathers would presumably include their respective role definitions (e.g., paternal and maternal responsibilities for educational progress and occupational choice) and their motivations for participation. As for the latter, we believe that socio-economic considerations play a larger role in shaping a father's participation, whereas the parental obligations associated with childhood play a larger role in shaping the mother's participation. By way of corroborating evidence, we find that educational values are more predictive of the fathers' rate of participation than the mothers'. Should school activism in behalf of socio-economic concerns affect youth in ways different than activism in behalf of childhood concerns, the efficacy of parental actions will thereby be influenced.

In short, the findings of this inquiry suggest variations in the relative influence of mothers and fathers according to the child's age, the family's social class and its cultural heritage, and the parents' motivations for participation. Previous studies differing in these respects are likely to arrive at varying estimates

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[24] To compound the issue, the relative rates of decline in participation may vary with social class, with lower-class fathers declining most rapidly and middle-class fathers maintaining their relative position (vis a vis mothers) or even closing the gap. Unfortunately, an analysis of the issue is not possible with only nine middle-class fathers of older children in the sample.

of the relative influence of each parent.

Cultural linkages. - The connections between the main cultural e elements in this study are problematical. Theoretically a society's conception of childhood and its age norms shape to a considerable degree the family's obligations for nurturance and supervision of the young. Yet empirical investigations are generally lacking on such topics as the adoption of new cultural definitions of childhood and adolescence by immigrants or by families changing their position in the class structure (cf. Blau, 1965). Nor have we inquired into the associated redefinitions of parenthood, the implementation of which may be complicated by other changes in the family system (e.g., the changes introduced by new sex norms, or a shift to a more independent nuclear-family system).

Finally, the connections between these cultural elements and various institutions remains ripe for study.[25] Existing knowledge undercuts the common-sense presumption that the demands for nurturance

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25 In this connection we need to take explicit cognizance of recent work by Pearlin and Kohn (1966) and Kohn (1969) which uncovers an economic basis for an emphasis on conformity vs. innovation having direct manifestations in families' childrearing practices and preferences. While their research clearly illustrates how economic forces do affect childrearing, it does not deal with the more general issue as to how the economy may shape the conception of childhood itself and attendant parental obligations. Nor does it deal with the admissibility of various economic influences into the family, given certain conceptions of childhood and family roles. In short, the authors do not deal with the larger institutional framework within which the economic influence operates.

and supervision of the young stem solely from the economic and educational spheres. Our one probe into the matter does not support the thesis (see note 14) and more extensive historical researches by Aries (1962) and Musgrove (1965) locate a number of social forces impinging on Western society's age norms and associated familial obligations. But these pioneers open up an area of inquiry rather than offer firm empirical conclusions. Hence, at present we remain largely in terra incognita. The findings of this study hopefully will spur further inquiry.

Action Implications

The Coleman Report (1966) representing the most comprehensive inquiry of its kind to date, finds that parents outweigh by far both schools and peers in their influence on youth's educational attainments. Although the precise strength of each group remains in doubt, criticism of the Coleman Report has not seriously undermined the conclusion about the primacy of the family for educational success or failure (IRCD Bulletin, 1967; Harvard Educational Review, 1968; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1967).

Paradoxically, the educational reforms proposed in response to the Coleman Report (e.g., Appendix D2 of U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967) almost uniformly ignore the family. It would seem that educational reformers tacitly view the parents of less proficient youth as neither willing nor capable of exerting the types of influence necessary for scholastic achievement. Such a view is untenable if we examine the processes whereby parents mold youth, a topic beyond the scope of the Coleman Report. In light of the evidence presented here and elsewhere, we believe the family deserves more consideration in plans of educational reform.

SUMMARY

This paper examines the basis of parent participation in the educational lives of their offspring. Current sociology depicts such activity as an expression of familial rights to choose a child's socio-economic destiny and orient him accordingly. Such an understanding overlooks the multifaceted nature of the family, with its many rights and duties to offspring, including the responsibility for inducting new members into society as children. The main hypothesis of this paper is that the prevailing conception of childhood influences the quality and quantity of parents' school participation.

To amplify this general thesis, the paper describes American culture as follows. The protection of youth, the pursuit of their well-being, a predictable supply of affection--these and other aspects of nurturance comprise a parent's duty. While obedience is a child's duty, it is also the parent's task to secure that obedience. The protection of youth and the maintenance of discipline require parent surveillance, even when youth are temporarily placed in the custody of other adults. Thus in our society adults must journey to school to discharge parental obligations to their children.

Four hypotheses within this general thesis are delineated and tested, using survey data on school participation (e.g., school visiting) by adults in a poor, urban, ethnically diverse neighborhood. The first two hypotheses pertain to the organization of the family for socializing children. The first hypothesis states that since American culture fixes the responsibility for nurturance and supervision on parents, especially mothers, school participation rates should vary accordingly. Confirming the hypothesis, mothers in the sample parti-

cipate more actively than fathers, and both parents respond more actively to the cultural prescriptions than parent surrogates and non-parents. An important exception to this generalization occurs among Puerto Ricans. The Spanish-speaking fathers in that ethnic group when firmly entrenched in primary-group relations, participate more actively than the mothers, ostensibly in adherence to the Hispanic tradition wherein the father acts as family ambassador to outside groups.

The second hypothesis projects a declining rate of participation with a child's maturation, since the magnitude of the parental obligations for nurturance etc. varies inversely with their children's age. On the basis of a cohort analysis, the greatest participation rates occur in behalf of the youngest cohort, ages 10 and 11, and progressively less through the oldest cohort, ages 16-19. By way of one exception to this generalization, in the middle class non-Jewish parents maintain their rate of participation throughout the second decade of their youngsters' lives. Moreover, Jewish parents in both the middle and working classes increase their rate of activity with their children's maturation. To mention one other ethnic pattern, we find Puerto Ricans tend to participate less frequently in behalf of each age cohort than either Blacks or white Gentiles, both of whom tend to participate less than Jews in the case of older children. The exceptions to the second hypothesis and the ethnic patterns do not obviate the relevance of parental obligations in the name of childhood, but rather they suggest (1) ethnic variations in the intensity of these family obligations; and (2) the additional relevance of socio-economic concerns among Jews and the middle class for continued involvement in their children's educational lives.

The third hypothesis anticipated a greater emphasis among upper-strata families on socialization and social control to the childhood status. This heavier normative emphasis manifests itself in several ways. Not only do we expect higher rate of participation by the upper strata, but also we expect pronounced differences mainly in the case of mothers, on whom the heavier burden falls, and in the case of older youth, when the upper strata continue childhood practices while the poor discontinue them. The data conform to the hypothesized trends. As the data for Jews also fit these trends, we conclude that both Jews and the affluent accord heavier normative emphasis to parental obligations associated with childhood.

Families differ in their relative emphasis on socialization and social control to economic positions vs. the childhood position. Theoretically nurturance and obedience assume relatively more importance among families i the lower strata whereas upper strata give comparatively more weight to socio-economic considerations. Accordingly, in the fourth hypothesis, we expect and observe greater variations in participation according to the parent's sex and the child's age in the lower class, and smaller variations in the middle class.

The paper adduces partial rather than compelling evidence in support of these hypotheses. Still needed is evidence on the felt obligations of parents in behalf of children. The intention is to document socially patterned behaviors which are not explainable in strictly socio-economic terms and which draw attention to a generally ignored phenomenon -- shared conceptions of childhood. The findings of the present study clearly warrant systematic study of cultural conceptions of childhood and associated family obligations.

By way of tracing implications of the general thesis to education, the paper suggests how the conception of childhood affects educational

ideology, a school's structure, the issues facing school personnel and the prospects of a community-control movement. As for implications bearing on youth, we theorize that parent participation tends to reinforce youngsters' conformity to school culture. The demonstrated decline in school participation by poor parents corresponds with known deteriorations in poor youngsters' measured abilities, academic performances, and scholastic motivations, all of which presage lower educational and occupational attainments. Thus, parents' socialization efforts in behalf of childhood seem to constitute a largely ignored but nevertheless important determinant of a youngster's economic life-chances. To restate the issue, understanding the family's influence on social mobility requires consideration of the multiple aspects of family relations. Such an understanding augments sociological theory and opens up new avenues of educational reform.

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